

United States Army Officer Development and Procurement during World War I and II: How the Army Grew its Officer Corps

A Monograph

by

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Abstract

United States Army Officer Development and Procurement during World War I and II: How the Army Grew its Officer Corps by MAJ James D. Trask, Army, 47 pages.

The contemporary United States Army officer corps consists of an all-volunteer force. While highly effective the army has not fought a protracted war with a near peer competitor since the inception of the all-volunteer force in 1973. The need for rapid expansion of the officer corps would be required if the army finds itself in such a dilemma.

This monograph presents two officer development and recruitment models utilized during the rapid military expansions of World War I and II. First is the Plattsburg officer training camps championed by the Military Training Camps Association, General Leonard Wood, and the cause of preparedness. The Plattsburg Camps focused on volunteer recruitment of highly educated members of society to serve as officers. These camps ended up producing the majority of officers that served in World War I and provide an example of maximum flexibility in recruitment and promotion. The second model looks at the rise of the Officer Candidate School following the 1940 Peacetime Draft and General George C. Marshall's desire for officers that already have military experience. This presented a new challenge as the institutional systems that did not exist prior to World War I added a level of bureaucracy that affected the methodology for officer expansion.

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Acronyms

ASTP	Army Specialized Training Program
CMTC	Citizen Military Training Camps
MTCA	Military Training Camps Association
OCS	Officer Candidate School
ORC	Officer Reserve Corps
ROTC	Reserve Officer Training Corps
SOR	Service of the Rear
UMT	Universal Military Training

Introduction

Shortly after the Armistice in 1918, two officers, French and American, were reminiscing about the battles and sacrifices which had culminated in victory. “I know you recruited over three million men in 19 months,” the Frenchman commented. “That is very good but not so difficult. But I am told also that, although you had no officers’ reserve to start with, you somehow found 200,000 new officers, most of them competent. That is what is astonishing and what was impossible. Tell me how that was done.”

—J. Garry Clifford, *The Citizen Soldiers*

The all-volunteer force is the current model of officer recruitment and retention.

Although this model has proven successful for the development of officers, there remain some unanswered questions. What if the United States finds itself in a position that needs exponential military personnel growth? Who will fill staff level positions once the military grows by potentially multiple corps or divisions? What happens if we do not have enough personnel to meet the need? The answers to these questions are easier if you just need enlisted personnel. However, the development of competent officers is a different problem. The purpose of this paper is to identify previous officer development models that could fill the need for wartime officers of quality and quantity. For the aims of this monograph, an officer development model is how the army identified, trained, and commissioned officers.

Before 1973, conscription and federal activation of guard and reserve forces was the preferred method for wartime service. Throughout the United States Army’s history the size and strength of the force has ebbed and flowed. In 1917, the United States declared war on Germany with a force of 100,000 but grew to over three million. In 1940, the conditions of war torn Europe drove the United States to conduct the first peacetime draft in the nation’s history. The 1940 peacetime draft grew the military from 200,000 personnel to over one million.¹ These increased growth periods of military personnel developed the need to create more army divisions for

¹ George Q. Flynn, *The Draft, 1940-1973* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas,

command and control purposes. As the army grew so did the need for competent officers. In each case, West Point and the Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) could not fill this need exclusively. Selective service would provide the majority of enlisted personnel but the need for competent officers would remain. Efforts of certain visionaries who recognized the gap in officer strength and quality provided solutions that made a clear difference during World War I and II.

One of these visionaries prior to World War I who recognized this gap and sought a way to close it was Major General Leonard Wood. MG Wood, an original Rough Rider with President Theodore Roosevelt, became the Army Chief of Staff in 1910 and was resented by many in the army because he did not have West Point origins.² He was also a student of Emory Upton's work *The Military Policy of the United States*. Upton's work advocated for a larger regular army with a professional force that would only grow during wartime.³ This was not an acceptable course of action for the American society as the tradition of having state militias was the preferred answer. MG Wood knew that the Army's strength of 100,000 soldiers would not be enough to take on a major military threat. Before the outbreak of war in Europe, Germany and France each had army's over 800,000.⁴ The great disparity in size and scale of armies and the lack of will by the American people to have a larger regular army drove MG Wood to develop a new approach. With the help of the former Secretary of War, Elihu Root, Wood started volunteer military training camps for university students during the summer.⁵ These camps proved so successful that Grenville Clark, a Manhattan lawyer and partner with Elihu Root, suggested the need to start a camp for older businessmen at Plattsburg Barracks in upstate New York. Following the camp in

² Garry J. Clifford, and Samuel R. Spencer, *The First Peacetime Draft* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1986), 15.

³ Garry J. Clifford, *The Citizen Soldiers; The Plattsburg Training Camp Movement, 1913-1920* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1972), 8.

⁴ John Whiteclay Chambers, *To Raise an Army: The Draft Comes to Modern America* (New York: Free Press, 1987), 75.

⁵ Clifford, *The Citizen Soldiers*, 12.

Plattsburg, other camps started across the country. By the end of the summer in 1916, nearly sixteen thousand volunteers underwent some form of military training.⁶ When President of the United States Woodrow Wilson declared war on Germany in 1917 these camps quickly converted into officer training camps and commissioned nearly twenty seven thousand graduates into the new Officer Reserve Corp (ORC) prior to the Selective Service Act's implementation. The significance of this cannot be overstated.

Similarly, President Franklin Roosevelt faced an issue of needing to expand the officer corps to meet the demands of a wartime army. Germany had invaded Poland in September 1939. The United Kingdom and France declared war on Germany two days later. The situation in Europe was deteriorating and by 1940 Germany had conquered France. Roosevelt recognized the need to grow the military and the first peacetime draft in the nation's history became law in September 1940. Once again, officers were needed to fill the ranks. The Plattsburg model was presented by Grenville Clark to the Secretary of War Henry Stimson and General George Marshall, the Army Chief of Staff. Clark recognized an opportunity to restart the Plattsburg Camps and move towards universal military training. Marshall disagreed with this method. The Plattsburg model had proven so successful in World War I at creating the ORC and laying the groundwork for successful Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC), Marshall did not see the need to renew the Plattsburg effort.⁷ For Marshall, the 120,000 in the ORC and the ninety thousand in ROTC would prove sufficient.⁸ Clark disagreed and pressed Stimson, who was a Plattsburger himself, to fund the officer training camps. Stimson continued to pressure Marshall to build the camps but only angered the Chief. Rather than build the camps Marshall relayed to Stimson that he was prepared to resign. Shortly after, Stimson abandoned the idea of the camps.

⁶ Clifford and Spencer, *The First Peacetime Draft*, 15.

⁷ Keith E. Eiler, *Mobilizing America: Robert P. Patterson and the War Effort, 1940-1945*. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997), 100.

⁸ Clifford and Spencer, *The First Peacetime Draft*, 114.

Marshall's placed a high value on soldiers in the ranks. Marshall believed that competitively selecting men with a minimum of six months service to attend branch specific Officer Candidate Schools (OCS) could fill the army's need.⁹ The goal of OCS was to produce two thousand candidates by July 1941. This was grossly inadequate to Stimson who raised his sights on an annual quota of twenty thousand.¹⁰ Stimson recognized the six months of service required would need to be waived and the potential of pulling from, as Clark would say, "Thousands of young men of outstanding intelligence and ability...entering the ranks as selectees."¹¹

The literature surrounding the area is focused on the creation of junior officers to serve in leadership positions. J. Gary Clifford's work provides the context of the development of the Plattsburg Camps prior to World War I. John Chambers, John Palmer, and James Cooke, give historical context of how the officer development models contributed to the war effort. George Flynn, Keith Eiler, and J. Gary Clifford and Samuel Spencer provide a contextual understanding of how the efforts of Grenville Clark, Robert Patterson, and Henry Stimson influenced the development of the peacetime draft legislation and the creation of officer candidate schools pre-World War II. Military scholars and theorists including Carl Von Clausewitz, Robert Putnam, and Stephen Ambrose complement the general objective of these works.

Collectively, these works refer to the Plattsburg model and the 1940 Peacetime draft in purely in a junior officer development tool but do not provide an accounting of how the officers contributed to the war effort at echelons higher than battalion. A gap exists in the identification of who these officers are and how they contributed.

The organization of this monograph will be in two sections. The first section will focus on the Plattsburg Camps, which began in 1915. The Plattsburg Camp's significance is due to the

⁹ Eiler, *Mobilizing America*, 100.

¹⁰ Ibid., 102.

¹¹ Ibid., 101.

“Preparedness Movement” in the United States, which foresaw US involvement in Europe during World War I. The second period will focus on the 1940 peacetime draft, which carried through 1941. This period provides another point in history that the United States felt the need to prepare for war in Europe beyond sending logistical supplies and aide. Both models allow for the identification of future officers who graduated from the camps and their historical significance to the operational force.

The contemporary operating environment prefers the use of an all-volunteer army. However, previous models of recruitment, to include the Plattsburg Camps and the 1940 peacetime draft, filled a vital need for operational level staff officers during World War I and II. If the United States finds itself in a major combat operation against a strong coalition when should they begin to identify and train officers? Stimson recognized the need to increase the OCS quota and decrease the six-month minimum time of service. This was never fully accepted by Marshall and serious shortages of junior officers developed later in the war.¹² This monograph will inform the reader of models that can provide a framework for the eventual need for operational staff officers not on the outset of major combat operations but during a protracted war.

Officer Creation for the New National Army

These camps have laid the foundation for good material for training officers and men in case of war, which everyday seems more and more inevitable.

— Major General Leonard Wood

Until 1914 the idea of Plattsburg was inconceivable. The concept of bringing civilian volunteers together in military training camps was not necessary and foreign to the traditions of state militias.¹³ When war broke out in Europe in mid-summer of 1914 the general feeling across

¹² Eiler, *Mobilizing America*, 111.

¹³ Penelope D. Clute, “The Plattsburg Idea,” *New York Archives Magazine*, 5, (Fall 2005),

the country was that the United States wanted no part of it. Even after a German U-boat sank the *Lusitania* in 1915, President Woodrow Wilson won re-election with a slogan: "He kept us out of the war!" A few Americans did not sympathize with Wilson's policies, believing for the United States war was inevitable. One of those Americans was Major General Leonard Wood.¹⁴

Wood was not the typical West Point trained officer. He was a graduate of Harvard Medical School and joined the army in 1885 as a surgeon. Wood received the Congressional Medal of Honor for his actions during the Apache campaign of 1886 in pursuit of the Apache leader Geronimo with his friend and fellow Rough Rider, Theodore Roosevelt.¹⁵ Wood would eventually rise to the Army Chief of Staff in 1910. As the new Chief, Wood faced many challenges. The seventy five thousand man army was a small force of garrisons left over from the Indian Wars. Wood wanted an army that could fight and win a major war. Wood wrote "wars are not matters of impulse of the moment but...are brought about by the great underlying causes which are almost as uncontrollable as the seasons, and the best way to make them as infrequent as possible, and short and humane when they do come, is to be reasonably ready for them."¹⁶ Prior to 1917, American society would have never permitted a sizable standing army. Wood recognized the need for a prepared military to execute foreign policy decisions; this led him to develop a trained citizen army. The natural place for him to begin was the state run militias, contemporarily known as the National Guard. This effort was quickly countered by Attorney General George W. Wickersham who decided in 1912 that it was unconstitutional to require militia service outside

14.

¹⁴ Francis Russell, "When Gentlemen Prepared for War," *American Heritage Magazine*, 15, (April 1964), 25.

¹⁵ Extract from Senate Committee on Veteran Affairs, 96th Congress, 1st Session, Senate Committee Print Number 3, February 14, 1979, 324.

¹⁶ Clifford, *The Citizen Soldiers*, 8.

the borders of the United States.¹⁷ This moved Wood in the direction of a creating a reserve force. Initially he proposed shortening enlistments from five years to two years of active service then naturally passing the remaining three years into a national reserve. Once again, the National Guard fought this effort and anything that might undercut the militias. Wood's efforts for a national reserve would have to come from an untapped source of the population. Wood's concept of creating an attitude of military preparedness throughout the country would have to start at a more grass roots level.¹⁸ The source of inspiration came from Lieutenant Henry Bull who was a professor of military science at Cornell University. In 1913 Bull read about a plan executed by the Navy to take college students on an eight week summer cruise. Suggesting to Wood that the Army adapt this plan and create special army summer camps for college students. On May 10, 1913 Wood sent a letter to the country's college and university presidents:

1. The secretary of War has decided to hold two experimental military camps of instruction for students of educational institutions during the coming summer vacation period. Should these camps prove a success, it is intended to hold them annually, one in each of the four sections of the country.

2. The object of these camps is, primarily, to increase the present inadequate personnel of the trained military reserve of the United States by a class of men from whom, in time of national emergency, a large proportion of the commissioned officers will probably be drawn, and upon whose military judgment at such time, the lives of many other men will in a measure depend. The object sought is not in any way one of military aggrandizement, but a means of meeting a vital need confronting a peaceful, unmilitary, though warlike nation, to preserve that desired peace and prosperity by the best known precaution, viz.: a more thorough preparation and equipment to resist any effort to break such peace.¹⁹

Wood recognized that the camps in 1913 would be experimental. He did not want to ask Congress for more funds so the students who volunteered would pay their own expenses.²⁰ He

¹⁷ Clifford, *The Citizen Soldiers*, 9.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 10-11.

¹⁹ Ralph Barton Perry, *The Plattsburg Movement, a Chapter of America's Participation in the World War* (New York, E.P. Dutton, 1921), 2.

²⁰ Clifford, *The Citizen Soldier*, 8. Approximately \$27.50 (\$10 for uniform, \$17.50 for food).

established two camps in the summer of 1913: one at Monterey, California, attended by sixty-three students from twenty-nine institutions; one at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, attended by one hundred fifty-nine students from sixty-one institutions.²¹ Wood timed the camp at Gettysburg to begin shortly after the reunion of the Blue and Gray (veterans who fought in the battle of Gettysburg). This helped curtail the cost of the camp due to the fact that tents and other sustainment functions were already established at the site. Well-known educators such as President Lawrence Lowell of Harvard, President John Grier Hibben of Princeton, and President Arthur Hadley of Yale endorsed the camps.²² The volunteers were trained and supported by regular army units. At Gettysburg thirteen officers, a battalion of infantry, a company of engineers, a battery of field artillery, and a troop of cavalry provided instruction. The instruction was rigorous and challenging. The volunteers would learn basic rifle marksmanship, the use of artillery, cavalry, medical, and signal. The camp's series of challenges culminated with a sixty-five mile hike. Upon completion of the camp the students became missionaries to the cause of preparedness. The success of the camps became of great interest to President Wilson. Even with his pacifist nature, he penned a letter stating:

I am very much interested in the successful working out of the idea of these college camps. I believe the students attending will derive not only a great deal of physical benefit from the healthful, open-air life, but also they will benefit from discipline, habits of regularity and the knowledge of personal and camp sanitation which the experience in camp will give them.

The camps will also tend to disseminate sound information concerning our military history and the present policy of Government in military matters, in addition to giving the young men themselves a very considerable amount of practical military instruction, which would be useful to them in case their services should ever be required.²³

²¹ Roster, "Federal Military Training Camps", 1913-1916.

²² Clifford, *The Citizen Soldier*, 19-22.

²³ Perry, *The Plattsburg Movement*, 16.

The success of the camps led to their extension in 1914. With the support of college presidents, the attendance jumped to over 667 and now spread over four locations. The resounding success of the camps gathered support by Secretary of War Lindley Garrison in his 1914 official report stating, “the students’ camps were very successful and bid fair to be more so and undoubtedly can and should be developed into a most valuable assistance.”²⁴ The momentum continued for MG Wood and his military training camps into 1915. Four student camps were established in Plattsburg, New York; San Francisco; American Lake, Washington; Ludington, Michigan with a total attendance of 1,066 volunteers.²⁵ The camps between 1913-1915 laid the groundwork for the eventual majority of procurement and training of officers to serve in World War I.

The sinking of the *Lusitania* by a German U-boat on May 7, 1915 sent a shock through the world. The attack killed 1,189 passengers, including 124 Americans. This event spurred Grenville Clark and his partners to act in the spirit of military preparedness. Clark along with his other Harvard friends, Elihu Root Jr., and Theodore Roosevelt Jr. penned a telegram to President Wilson stating:

The undersigned citizens of New York express their conviction that national interest and honor imperatively require adequate measures both to secure reparations for past violations by Germany of American rights and secure guarantees against future violations. We further express the conviction that the considered judgment of the nation will firmly support the government in any measures, however serious, to secure full reparations and guarantees.²⁶

Clark had read an article about the military summer camps for college students and believed that this camps could be adapted for men his age, between their late twenties and early thirties. Clark and his compatriots would then reach out to General Wood and propose the idea of a military training camp for older businessmen. Wood, at this time, was no longer the Chief of

²⁴ Perry, *The Plattsburg Movement*, 19.

²⁵ Ibid., 20.

²⁶ Clifford, *The Citizen Soldiers*, 55.

Staff but had assumed command of the Eastern Department. Wood had become increasingly frustrated with the lack attention that the Wilson administration was applying to military matters. Wood saw an opportunity with having a camp attended by the son's of the country's most influential families to continue to push his idea of military preparedness. After speaking to Clark, Wood agreed to the camp if Clark could come up with one hundred volunteers the War Department would acquire the resources.²⁷ The basic idea of the Plattsburg Camp was found in the model of the student camps of 1913-1915:

(1) Responsible citizenship applied to military matters, implying an intelligent forecast of coming events and a willingness to prepare for them in advance.

(2) First-hand service, experience and demonstration as the best means of promoting such preparation.

(3) Recognition of the special need for officers to command emergency forces, and the belief that such officers could be obtained most quickly by training the educated men and provide leaders in civilian life.

(4) An insistence upon the unity and centralized control of the Army of the United States, in the time of peace as well in the time of war.²⁸

The camp would be held in Plattsburg, New York and the attendance would reach over 1,200 when training began on August 10. Of the 1,200 that attended the camp most were from the advertised elite. Political figures such as: the Mayor of New York John Mitchel, Episcopal Bishop James De Wolf, and author Richard Harding Davis all volunteered. The course would follow the same methods that the previous camps established except they would squeeze five weeks of training into four. The men would wake at 5:45 with calisthenics and drill until lunchtime. Then they would have all afternoon of military specific training in field artillery, signal, cavalry, and engineering. Following dinner the attendees would receive further instruction

²⁷ Nancy Peterson Hill, *A Very Private Public Citizen: The Life of Grenville Clark* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2014), 49.

²⁸ Perry, *The Plattsburg Movement*, 33.

on military matters until the playing of Taps at ten.²⁹

The intensive training brought real military results. Wood was ecstatic that he was able to demonstrate on a large military scale that civilians could be made into soldiers quickly as long as a trainee had enough intelligence and experience. The camps also proved to the trainees what they were capable of achieving. A sense of confidence, discipline, and most importantly to Wood patriotism was pervasive. The sense of patriotism that was gathered generated momentum into the cause of preparedness. The success of the first Plattsburg Camp was important for Clark and his vision of future camps. Clark felt that Plattsburg was not conceived solely as an emergency measure but should rather become part of a sound military system of the United States. Clark and Wood wanted the men to act as missionaries for the cause of national defense. Clark and the other societal elite founding members, minus Wood, would form the Military Training Camps Association (MTCA). The MTCA would act as a politically neutral entity with the goal of preparedness and devoted themselves to the cause of universal military training (UMT). Overall, the camp impressed the army, the public, and even the Wilson administration with the caliber of the recruits. This was an important year for Clark, Wood, and the preparedness movement. But, Clark knew with the impending war in Europe there was much that needed to be done.³⁰

Rise of the Officer Training Camps

Following the attack on the British ship the *Arabic*, a passenger liner, on August 20, 1915, President Wilson received a promise from the German government that it would no longer attack unarmed passenger ships without warning. The *Arabic* Pledge, as it became known, brought the country closer to war if the Germans violated their pledge and continued their campaign of unrestricted submarine warfare. This caused Congress to discuss military policy and

²⁹ Russell, "When Gentlemen Prepared for War", 89.

³⁰ Clifford, *The Citizen Soldiers*, 92-93.

the concept of preparedness during the December 1915 session.³¹ It was quickly evident that the brave posture of the United States towards Germany did not match its military might. A war was already raging in Europe for sixteen months and now the United States had weighed in on the conflict. The military unpreparedness of the United States began to emerge. In a stunning statement, Frederic Huidekoper wrote in his book, *The Military Unpreparedness of the United States*, published in 1915:

Unlimited as our military resources unquestionably are, Congress has thus far failed utterly to foster and development, so that they may actually be a source of weakness insomuch as they invite attack by a stronger power than we. By contrast with our military resources, undeveloped though they be, our actual military strength is the feeblest of all the great nations.³²

Huidekoper continued to demonstrate a chart that showed the parity of forces of the United States eighty thousand regulars to Russia's almost six million and Germany's four million. This harsh reality compelled Congress to create a plan to reorganize and grow the military.

The Military Training Camps Association recognized that growth and restructuring of the military was a top priority for Congress. Grenville Clark began lobbying congress for federal funding to train and commission officers utilizing the Plattsburg model. On June 3 the National Defense Act of 1916 passed which included federal recognition and funding for military training camps run jointly by the War Department and the MTCA. Graduates would be commissioned in the newly created Officer Reserve Corps (ORC). When the camps of 1916 began, over 85 percent of attendees were original Plattsburgers who came back for their second year. While attending the camp, they prepared to take the ORC exam and if they passed, they became eligible for a commission in the ORC ranging from second lieutenant up to major. Over six hundred attendees

³¹ Hill, *A Very Private Public Citizen*, 52.

³² Frederic Huidekoper, *The Military Unpreparedness of the United States: The History of the American Land Forces from Colonial Times until June 1, 1915* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1916), 522.

took the ORC exam and achieved “very satisfactory” results.³³

By February 9, 1917 the United States officially severed diplomatic relations with Germany and the MTCA recognized the necessity of supplying well-qualified officers for the eventual war effort. With the recognition from the War Department and having demonstrated preparedness before 1917 the Plattsburgers were ready when war came.³⁴ When the US declared war with Germany on April 2, 1917, the MTCA for the previous two months had already been preparing for the summer camps of 1917. After a visit to the War Department shortly after the declaration of war, the MTCA realized that there was no definite plan for the training and recruitment of officers. Two officers from the Adjutant General’s office and not by the General Staff did the little planning that had occurred.³⁵ Working with the MTCA on April 17 the Army finally announced the plan for sixteen officer training camps held in various locations, lasting three months, attended by 2,500 men each, beginning on May 8. It is very important to recognize that this plan of action began more than a month before the Draft Act of May 18, 1917.³⁶

The task of recruiting forty thousand officer candidates in three weeks would become so daunting that the Army could not do it alone. The Military Training Camps Association, who had been preparing for a moment like this since their inception, accomplished this task. The MTCA, utilizing the roster of attendees from previous camps, was able to begin recruitment. Within three weeks of the announcement of the officer training camps over 150,000 men offered themselves and of those 100,000 were physically examined. In all, about seventy thousand applications were approved and camp commanders reduced that number to approximately forty thousand meeting

³³ Hill, *A Very Private Public Citizen*, 62. The candidates that took the ORC did not receive their commissions immediately. The MTCA initially refrained from the War Departments efforts to recruit for the ORC by instruction and examinations preferring hands on training approach.

³⁴ Clifford, *The Citizen Soldiers*, 229.

³⁵ Perry, *The Plattsburg Movement*, 181.

³⁶ Clifford, *The Citizen Soldiers*, 230.

the required quota. There were, however, many candidates that did not meet the requirements of graduation. This was due in part to the haste of the application and selection process but also due to the rigor of the camps. The MTCA adamantly opposed commissioning officers under a system of simply taking an exam without the close observation of selected personnel.³⁷

At the close of the first series of camps on August 15, 18,929 second lieutenants, 4,452 first lieutenants, 3, 722 captains, 235 majors, one lieutenant colonel, and two colonels received commissions into the Officer Reserve Corps.³⁸ The wartime Army reached an eventual strength of about four million, requiring 200,000 officers. Almost half, ninety six thousand, of the Army officers that served in the war earned commissions through the Officer Training Camps. The success of the MTCA and the development of the Officer Training Camps solved the problem of securing commissioned officers for the war effort.³⁹ Secretary of War Newton Baker commented in his *Annual Report* for 1918, “Thousands of our young men...left positions of responsibility and profit, dropped their personal affairs and devoted themselves wholeheartedly to the new business of war...the results have exceeded our warmest hopes.”⁴⁰ The “Ninety Day Wonders” had met the demands of the army but other questions quickly become present; where did the majority of the Plattsburgers serve? Did they serve as qualified officers on staffs higher than battalion?

The majority of Plattsburgers became leaders at the tactical level as infantry, cavalry, and field artillery officers. This is to be expected because of the large amount of second lieutenants that received their commissions into the ORC. Only a few became members of operational level staffs to contribute to the war effort. By the fourth series of camps on May 1918 all thirteen

³⁷ Perry, *The Plattsburg Movement*, 190.

³⁸ Clifford, *The Citizen Soldiers*, 238. A second camp would graduate in November 1917 commissioning no one higher than Major. The first series of camps was the only to graduate officers Lieutenant Colonel and above.

³⁹ Chambers, *To Raise and Army*, 55.

⁴⁰ War Department Annual Reports, 1918 (Washington, DC, 1918), 1-19.

thousand OTC graduates were commissioned as second lieutenants.⁴¹ The need for operational staff officers continued to grow as Germany began an offensive on the Western Front. General John Pershing, the American Expeditionary Forces (AEF) commander, anticipated only needing thirty divisions in France by early 1919, but he quickly asked for one hundred divisions by June 1918 to counter the German offensive.⁴² This growth of new officers complicated matters for the MTCA. The sheer number officers required created a new obstacle, a decline in the quality of officer candidates. This decline in quality did not sit well with the MTCA leadership and their desire for qualified civilians to fill the needed officer demands. Pershing's demand and the MTCA's wishes berthed the creation of the Central Officers' Training Schools. The schools trained future officers in the finer points of infantry, cavalry, and artillery.⁴³ These new schools, spread over multiple locations began graduating new officers on a monthly basis. Other branches began training officers in their specialties. The Engineer Corps was always considered a branch of the line but served in more of a technical capacity and began drawing newly commissioned officers from the Officer Training Camps. Medical Services, Ordnance Corps, Quartermaster Corps, and Chemical Warfare corps initially drew officers directly from civilian life because of their technical expertise but the perception of commissioning lower quality officers persisted. The training camps were viewed as the appropriate method to fix this perception. Colonel J. G. Steese summarized the situation in his article "Procurement of Commissioned Personnel in War" by saying "...all the staff corps and departments either had schools established or in contemplation, and the principle that all officers should be given fundamental military training."⁴⁴

The desire of Pershing to grow the AEF to one hundred divisions also fed the MTCA's

⁴¹ Clifford, *The Citizen Soldiers*, 252. Some 2,400 candidates from the fourth series of camps finished their training in France and earned their commissions over there.

⁴² Chambers, *To Raise and Army*, 177.

⁴³ Clifford, *The Citizen Soldiers*, 253.

⁴⁴ Perry, *The Plattsburg Movement*, 199-200.

narrative of no danger in over-supplying the War Department with qualified and trained officers. This narrative was derived from the War Department's miscalculation of the size and magnitude of the needed amount of officers prior to the first camps in May 1917. Initially, the War Department was going to authorize seven hundred commissions and at the last moment the MTCA lobbied to have that number increased to twenty two thousand. The increase in officer commissioning paid off as seven thousand officers were used for the war effort immediately.⁴⁵

Another matter that related to the procurement of officers was the estimate of casualties and the rate needed to replace them. According to Pershing's G-5, Training, Brigadier General H. B. Fiske, the AEF staff asked for six thousand surplus officers, captains and lieutenants, that were graduates of the Officer Training Camps to be immediately sent to complete their training in Europe. Some of these officers were sent through the Line School at Langres while others completed specialty training at Valbonne and Valreas. This product, expected to fully meet the estimate of periodic losses.⁴⁶

The MTCA, once again, rose to the occasion to meet the demands of the war effort. But, by the armistice in November 11, 1918 the AEF was now the size of three Armies and over forty-five divisions. As stated earlier, the majority of Plattsburgers were commissioned as second lieutenants at the tactical level. To the earlier question, where did this new army that grew from 125,000 to now over two million get their qualified staff officers? In short, the qualified officers to fill division and higher staff positions came from the early camps of 1913-1916 receiving their commissions in the ORC prior 1918.⁴⁷

⁴⁵ Perry, *The Plattsburg Movement*, 201. By the spring of 1918 it became apparent that the draft would be extended to grow the Army to 4,500,000 or more, creating another officer shortage. This problem did not materialize because of the armistice that was signed in November that same year.

⁴⁶ Richard Stewart, *American Military History, Volume II: The United States Army in a Global Era, 1917-2003* (Washington DC: Center of Military History, 2005), 25.

⁴⁷ Roster, "Federal Military Training Camps", 1913-1916.

Plattsburgers Contributing to Operational Staffs

To fully understand how an individual can graduate a ninety-day camp, earn a commission in the Officer Reserve Corps, and then quickly find themselves on an operational level staff it is important to understand the individuals that attended the Plattsburg Camps. General Leonard Wood, as the father of the preparedness movement, always had faith in the citizen soldier. Wood believed that he could take a citizen and turn him into a soldier in six months compared to the two or three as was customary.⁴⁸ This belief caused Wood to separate his ideology from the army professionals. The individuals who could be trained soldiers in such a short amount of time would need to be highly educated members of society. The early days of the Plattsburg Camps in 1913, when they were nothing more than a vision by Wood, got the majority of support from colleges. Wood, a Harvard graduate and frequent visitor of the Harvard Club, was able to gather support from prominent college presidents to recruit for his initial camps. College presidents from such institutions as the University of California-Berkley, Columbia, Cornell, Stanford, Yale, Lehigh University, and Harvard all strongly supported Wood's desire for preparedness.⁴⁹ By Wood identifying the right type of citizen and then eventually followed through by the Military Training Camp Association they were able to produce officers for echelons above battalion immediately.⁵⁰

With the arrival of the first divisions of the AEF in France, it brought about the need to make changes to the organization of the army in order to adapt to its new environment. The new operational staff organization required an increase in the number of highly trained officer personnel. For the staff organization to function, it was necessary to create a short and intensive course in staff training for selected officers. Beginning on November 28, 1917, the Army General

⁴⁸ Clifford, *The Citizen Soldiers*, 8.

⁴⁹ Ibid, 19. Jacob Schurman of Cornell actually convinced the New York state legislature to build a \$350,000 armory for the university's cadet corps.

⁵⁰ *The United States Army in World War* (Volume 14), 298.

Staff College opened at Carteret-Trecourt Barracks, Langres, Haute, Marne. Officers attending the staff training were given twenty map problems and required to create a solution utilizing staff principles as well as the necessary technique to communicate in the form of orders. By the close of the Army General Staff College in Langres a total of 537 officers graduated and were recommended for duty as staff officers.⁵¹

The linkages of Plattsburg graduates who attended the camps between 1913-1916 and officers who served on operational staffs can be found in the MTCA's register of graduates, American Expeditionary Forces General Orders, and the Harvard University's Alumni Bulletin (which proved a great source of identifying officers who were assigned to division operational staffs).⁵² What is important to note is that not all officers who attended the Plattsburg Camps between 1913-1916 received their commission from the Officer Training Camps, which began in May 1917.

Amazingly, three officers, Major Hugh A. Bayne, Judge Advocate; Captain Frederick T. Hill, Quartermaster Corps; Captain Robert Bacon, Quartermaster Corps, who served on the AEF staff from its inception on May 26, 1917 were graduates of the Plattsburg Camps of 1916 and received their commissions into the Officer Reserve Corps shortly after the passage of the National Defense Act of 1916.⁵³ Initially, this may not seem significant to a staff comprised of more than fifty officers but it is important to recognize this is one staff in an Army that grew to almost three million. Also, the Selective Service Act of 1917 would not have their first round of registration until 5 June. To have officers serving on a theater staff who were commissioned through a means other than West Point is a tremendous accomplishment by General Wood and

⁵¹ *The United States Army in World War* (Volume 14), 333-335.

⁵² *Harvard Alumni Bulletin*, Volume 20, Number 1 (September 1917), 17. By August 1917, 4,750 Harvard men were connected to service of the war effort.

⁵³ American Expeditionary Forces General Order No. 1.; Roster, "Federal Military Training Camps" 1913-1916.

the MTCA. The AEF staff would receive two additional Plattsburg graduates by 30 August and the steady stream of staff officers would continue to arrive on the AEF staff throughout the war effort.

Another significant event is the creation of the Corps staffs. General Order No. 9 issued on January 15, 1918 authorized the creation of the First Corps staff. Once again a Plattsburg graduate, Major Ernest McCullough, was a founding member of that operational staff.⁵⁴ By June 25, 1918, Second, Third, and Fourth Corps came into existence with three more Plattsburg graduates assigned to their operational staffs.⁵⁵

Upon further research of the Harvard Alumni Bulletin of 1917-1918, eleven 1913-1916 Plattsburg Camp attendees served on Divisional staffs prior to December 1917.⁵⁶ A simple roster alone cannot determine the effectiveness of these officers; nonetheless they provided these divisions with the appropriate manpower. As previously stated, the officers who were identified to serve on operational staffs were already highly educated members of society. This model was dependent on these people and could not have been successful otherwise.

Quality of Officers

The quality of the Plattsburg officers who served on operational staffs is extremely important. What is distinct about the officers who commissioned as field grades is they were already very seasoned businessmen, lawyers, or served in government. This represented the vision of GEN Leonard Wood by finding individuals from the “elite” or “highly educated” members of society. This would shorten their training time and bring a level of knowledge and expertise to the operational staffs in which they served. The need for expertise outweighed the need for combat training. These individuals did not become leaders of line units in infantry or

⁵⁴ American Expeditionary Forces General Order No. 9.

⁵⁵ American Expeditionary Forces General Order No. 102.

⁵⁶ *Harvard Alumni Bulletin*, Volume 20, Number 1-4 (September -October 1917).

cavalry but as quartermasters, judge advocates, and in the medical services corps.

General Pershing had an eye for talent and wanted to get the best and the brightest on his operational staff. He also recognized that due to the lack of military preparedness prior to the outbreak of the war there were precious few trained staff officers in the army. Pershing believed that the General Staff School at Fort Leavenworth was training staff officers equal to any in the world but there were few of them. Pershing had a demand for officers with talent and would do everything he could to get them to France.⁵⁷ This meant that their need for military training was second to the expertise that they brought to the staff. What Pershing desired was expertise and finding officers to fill the void would be the officers from Plattsburg.

Robert Bacon is a perfect example of the quality of individual that could be used for military service. Bacon graduated Harvard in 1880 with his friend and classmate Theodore Roosevelt. He then moved into the business world and in 1894 began working for J.P. Morgan & Co. During his time with J.P. Morgan he participated in the formation of the United States Steel Cooperation, which purchased the assets of the Carnegie Steel Company for \$1.4 billion dollars. He also participated in the formation of the Northern Securities Company, which combined the assets of Northern Pacific Railroad and the Burlington Railroad.⁵⁸

In 1905 at the request of his friend President Teddy Roosevelt, Bacon accepted the position of Assistant Secretary of State renouncing his private life and dedicating what he had to the service of the public. As the Assistant Secretary he was a great asset to the Secretary of State, Elihu Root whom had come into office the same time. In January 1909, Root resigned the position

⁵⁷ James J. Cooke, *Pershing and His Generals: Command and Staff in the AEF* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1997), 9.

⁵⁸ James Brown Scott, *Robert Bacon: Life and Letters* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, Page, 1923), 64. The creation of the Northern Securities Company caused the U.S. Department of Justice to sue in the first anti-trust litigation in the United States. This created so much stress for Bacon that he quit J.P. Morgan and took a two-year hiatus away from business in 1903.

and Bacon became the Secretary of State for the remainder of the Roosevelt administration.⁵⁹ Following the election of William Taft as President, Bacon became the Ambassador to France in 1910-1912. In early 1914, he returned to France working with the American Field Service providing ambulances and drivers to British and French soldiers. Following the outbreak of war in Europe, Bacon became a champion of preparedness. Having lived in France when the war began he had a deep conviction for action. He practiced what he preached by attending the August 1915 Plattsburg Camp as an example to his countrymen. His background and civilian experience contributed to his pursuit of a commission in the Medical Reserve Corps, but that request was denied. Following the declaration of war by President Wilson in 1917, Bacon was commissioned as a Major in the Quartermaster Corps in May 27, 1917. Immediately after his commissioning in the afternoon he received his orders that evening assigning him to General Pershing's staff. One day later he was aboard the vessel the *Baltic* with Pershing and the rest of his staff en route to France.⁶⁰

Bacon's previous experience as a businessman, ambassador, and Secretary of State quickly paid off for Pershing and his staff. Bacon viewed arriving back in France as somewhat of a homecoming. He spoke French fluently, knew the culture, was a master negotiator, and knew the influential people who could get things done. Pershing, recognizing Bacon's particular skill set, assigned him as Post Commandant of the AEF headquarters in Chaumont, France. Under Bacon's command were all troops, except officers, at the headquarters, and a company of Marines who provided provost and other guard details. In total, 1,400 people fell under his command. While in command, Bacon received the gigantic task of preparing Chaumont to receive twenty thousand Americans soldiers. This challenge could have only been met by someone with Bacon's particular skill set. Chaumont was a town of fifteen thousand set on a hill

⁵⁹ Scott, *Robert Bacon: Life and Letters*, 97.

⁶⁰ *Ibid*, 201.

and without adequate facilities to support such a large influx of personnel. The residents of Chaumont did not perceive the influx of men with much enthusiasm and without their help could have seriously disrupted the project. Recognizing this, Bacon quickly developed a relationship with the Mayor and they began working with the local citizens to begin the development of the camp. He personally made local connections by going house to house to arrange for living areas that would suffice in the midterm. Bacon was able to procure engineers and men to begin the construction of the camp. Most astonishing was his ability to do all this in a matter of two weeks. The Mayor of Chaumont spoke in admiration of Bacon accomplishing something that seemed impossible. Bacon's skills set as a negotiator and businessman paid off.⁶¹

Soon, Bacon was promoted directly to Colonel and assigned as the Chief of the American Military Mission with the British Expeditionary Forces located at British General Headquarters in Montreuil, France. His responsibilities required him to have daily contact with the British General Staff, specifically Field Marshal Sir Douglas Haig, Commander-in-Chief of the British Forces in France. Serving as General Pershing's liaison officer suited Bacon; as he was familiar with acting in the best interest of his superiors and maintaining a positive relationship with the engaged parties. His success with British staff was so profound that Haig himself asked Pershing for Bacon to remain on his personal staff when, according to precedent, Bacon had to be replaced with an officer of higher rank. Pershing agreed and Colonel Bacon was assigned to Haig's personal staff as the liaison officer with American troops in the British area of operations.⁶²

Not all men were former Secretaries of State but still provided necessary skills for the new kinds of problems that the AEF would experience. One such problem was that the AEF staff had become unworkable by 1918 as it expanded its functions. The General Headquarters, located

⁶¹ Scott, *Robert Bacon: Life and Letters*, 203.

⁶² Ibid, 241. Brigadier General William Harts assumed Bacon's previous position but was only given responsibility of detached units, such as engineers and medical. Harts was never given control of American divisions serving under Haig's command.

in Chaumont, became overly crowded, as all the staff functions were located in one place. This created extra work for Pershing as he became immersed in details that would be better suited for subordinate staff officers. Also, Pershing was greatly concerned with the movement of men and supplies to France. Brigadier General James Harbord, Pershing's chief of staff, recognized the need to reorganize the staff and streamline its functions. Tasked to organize this chaos was Colonel Johnson Hagood who was given complete freedom to recommend a total restructuring of the AEF staff if necessary. Colonel Hagood formed the Hagood board and began recruiting very high-quality members to serve on the board.⁶³

One of the board members was Major S.P. Wetherill of the Quartermaster Corps. Wetherill graduated from the 1916 Plattsburg Camps and was a civilian efficiency expert from American Industry. He was tasked to reorganize the entire AEF supply service. Based on the recommendations from Wetherill and the other board members the AEF would go under a complete structural overhaul. The recommended change was the separation of operations and sustainment. Operations would remain located at Chaumont and focus on preparing for combat operations through training and fighting. Sustainment would fall under the Service of the Rear (SOR) and would move to Tours, France. The SOR would include the chief quartermaster, chief surgeon, chief engineer, chief ordnance officer, chief signal officer, and chief of the air service. Also, the elimination of the terms administrative, intelligence, operations, coordination, and training sections and replaced with G-1, G-2, G-3, G-4, and G-5. While this sounds cosmetic, the effects of this change were not. This created a clear line of authority from the chief of staff to his assistants and allowed the staff to be the principle set of workers for Pershing.⁶⁴ Also, freeing Pershing to focus on the operational planning of combat operations. Now the AEF staff was more streamlined and combat-ready and fell in line with what the coalition partners of France and

⁶³ Cooke, *Pershing and His Generals*, 47.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 48-51.

Britain utilized. Harbord would comment on the changes saying “the relief of General Pershing’s time and the increased efficiency of the supply branches were almost instantaneously evident.”⁶⁵

Both Bacon and Wetherill were everything that Leonard Wood, Grenville Clark, and the rest of the MTCA’s leadership had envisioned. The MTCA was always dedicated to the cause of preparedness and universal military training (UMT). The Plattsburg Camps had invigorated a large segment of the population into military service. Prior to the Armistice the MCTA began their efforts to create a larger pool of officers for the War Department. Clark, who was a commissioned officer working for the Adjutant General’s Office, began to expand the Reserve Officer Training Corps throughout colleges and universities in America. Clark’s idea was to not only create a large group of young men for military service but also continue the long-standing desire for UMT.⁶⁶ The MTCA’s efforts would not go without some criticism.

The MTCA met the need of the wartime army by providing much needed officers. Quality of officers was always a concern for the MTCA and this drove their belief in recruiting and training individuals from a highly educated background. The men who decided to attend military training camps did so as volunteers at their own expense initially. The cause of preparedness was championed by a wealthy and influential segment of society. This created a belief that there was class discrimination against middle and lower class individuals. Most of the officers were who received their commissions and attended the training camps owed their initial appointments to personal connections. The argument against the MTCA was their bias to selecting members from the elite instead of having a democratic army for a democratic society.⁶⁷ This belief had lasting affects against the MTCA and the future desire for UMT post war.

⁶⁵ Cooke, *Pershing and His Generals*, 51.

⁶⁶ Clifford, *The Citizen Soldiers*, 256-259. By 1920-1921 244 universities and colleges with approximately 100,000 students were involved in ROTC.

⁶⁷ Chambers, *To Raise an Army*, 233.

National Defense Act of 1920

Following the end of World War I Congress began to debate on the post war army size. United States power and influence had increased greatly during the war. President Wilson's desire was for the United States to enter into the League of Nations but the Senate rejected the proposal.⁶⁸ The formulation of an extensive new defense policy became of great importance. For many, World War I provided a shocking example of military unpreparedness. The army could not conduct an offensive operation for almost a full year after the declaration of war and was reliant on Britain and France for training and supplies for much of the war effort. Congress, realizing that it would not be possible to sustain the size and scale of the AEF, began drafting legislation for a new post war army.⁶⁹ The MTCA quickly started a campaign to lobby for one of their most important goals, Universal Military Training.

The MTCA proposed a bill for a small active army of no more than 200,000, primarily for training the larger reserve force built around universal military training. Every man would enter into mandatory training for six months then serve five years actively in the reserve force, followed by another five years in an inactive reserve role, only to be called upon in times of national emergency. The National Guard would return to its prewar status as a state militia.⁷⁰ This proposal had the support of General Pershing and his aide-de-camp George C. Marshall. Marshall and Pershing did not want the military to enter into another state of unpreparedness and return to a skeleton of its former self. The MTCA, Pershing, and Marshall thought the concept of citizen-soldier was the best course of action for the postwar army. Unfortunately, political

⁶⁸ F.S. Northedge, *The League of Nations: Its Life and Times, 1920-1946*. (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1986), 85-89. The rejection was centered around Article 10 of the covenant which guaranteed "*The Members of the League undertake to respect and preserve as against external aggression the territorial integrity and existing political independence of all Members of the League.*"

⁶⁹ Mark A. Stoler, *George C. Marshall: Soldier-statesman of the American Century*. (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1989), 44-45.

⁷⁰ Clifford, *The Citizen Soldiers*, 278.

leadership did not agree.⁷¹

When debate about the bill began in April 1920, neither Democrat nor Republican agreed on UMT. The Democrats accused the Republicans of “militarism” specifically related to the defeat of the League of Nations bill. Democrats took the party line that since Republicans defeated the League of Nations bill they clearly wanted universal military training so as to prepare for wars to come. To complicate matters, primaries were coming and a vote on universal military training was not popularly favorable.⁷² The MTCA tried to gather partisan support for the bill but soon found themselves against the Republican House Majority Leader Frank Mondell. Mondell publicly denounced universal military training as radical and extravagant costing more than a billion dollars a year. Based on Mondell’s comments other Republicans quickly began to abandon universal military training and wanted to focus on the economy. The MTCA tried to quickly refute this number and argued that a larger regular would be much more expensive and not in the tradition of democratic service. With Mondell’s lack of support the goal of universal military training was quickly failing. .⁷³

That summer the National Defense Act of 1920 passed and was signed into law by President Wilson. The law set the postwar army at a maximum strength of 280,000 regulars with a slight enlargement of the General Staff. The National Guard would maintain its federal and state status. The ROTC and Officers’ Reserve Corps would be strengthened through college and summer training programs. An Organized Reserve Corps for enlisted was created that consisted mostly of veterans that received previous federal training. The military was reorganized into nine corps areas each of them assigned one regular division that was charged with training two

⁷¹ Stoler, *George C. Marshall*, 46-47.

⁷² Chambers, *To Raise an Army*, 247.

⁷³ Ibid, 246.; Clifford, *The Citizen Soldiers*, 287.

National Guard divisions and three Organized Reserve divisions.⁷⁴ Finally, the bill called for the creation of the Citizen Military Training Camps that trained individual volunteers over the summer, much like the Plattsburg Camps, with no expectation for military service.⁷⁵ The passage of the law completely omitted universal military training.

The passage of the law was a direct blow to the cause of preparedness. Without universal military training, filling the ranks of the reserve force would become a difficult matter. Even more significant was the elimination of any provision for wartime Selective Service.⁷⁶ The fears of Pershing and Marshall were realized in 1921 as congressional budget cuts made things worse.⁷⁷ By 1922 the total strength of the regular military was reduced to 125,000 and by 1923 the National Guard had half of its 435,000 authorized personnel. It would be impossible to retain all the organizations created under the National Defense Act. The General Staff decided to maintain the nine divisions at greatly reduced numbers and abolish the corps training areas.⁷⁸ The country sank into serious unpreparedness, and the tiny regular army lost contact with the populace.⁷⁹

Despite the omission of universal military training in the National Defense Act of 1920 the construct for a citizen army had been established. The MTCA would continue the cause of preparedness through the Citizen Military Training Camps. Only through active demonstration could the MTCA convince the public of the goodness in universal military training. The MTCA

⁷⁴ John McAuley Palmer, *America in Arms; the Experience of the United States with Military Organization* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1941), 182-185.

⁷⁵ Donald M. Kington, *Forgotten Summers: The Story of the Citizens' Military Training Camps, 1921-1940* (San Francisco, CA: Two Decades Pub., 1995), 7.

⁷⁶ Chambers, *To Raise an Army*, 247. The elimination of Selective Service as a wartime provision greatly disappointed President Wilson and he almost vetoed the bill. He only signed the law to prevent placing the future of the army in doubt.

⁷⁷ Stoler, *George C. Marshall*, 46.

⁷⁸ Palmer, *America in Arms*, 188.

⁷⁹ Stoler, *George C. Marshall*, 51.

would continue this policy for the next two decades.⁸⁰

The Plattsburg movement during the interwar period was only partly successful. Despite over 500,000 individuals attending a Citizen Military Training Camp beginning in 1923 only a little over four thousand officers were commissioned by 1934. The military camps were viewed more as citizenship training camps placing more of an emphasis on athletics than military instruction. The urgency of 1915 was missing and the MTCA would continue but without the vigor of being faced with a world threat.

Preparing for Another World War

By 1939 the Army contained fewer than 175,000 men in nine understrength divisions. The German invasion of Poland began in September and the United States once again found itself being affected by a war in Europe. The idea of preparedness became a hot topic and questions began to emerge on what would be the United States involvement.⁸¹ What would America's position be if the MTCA bill of universal military training passed? Most likely, in addition to the regular army there would be fifty-five fully organized divisions in the National Guard and Reserves and an unorganized reserve of more than ten million.⁸² Since this was not the case the army would have to reconstitute a force that could fight a global war. Fortunately, the National Defense Act of 1920 did provide a construct for mobilization that did not exist prior to World War I.⁸³

The Passing of the National Defense Act of 1920 did not contain a provision for Selective Service as a wartime policy. Recognizing that this would delay wartime mobilization if the United States entered into a war with a large nation, the Army had quietly prepared a framework

⁸⁰ Clifford, *The Citizen Soldiers*, 295.

⁸¹ Stoler, *George C. Marshall*, 69.

⁸² Palmer, *America in Arms*, 191.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 194.

for Selective Service during the interwar period.⁸⁴ The General Staff created the Joint Army and Navy Selective Service Committee in 1926. The creation of the board was “on the assumption that Congress, after considering past experience, will enact Selective Service shortly after a National Emergency arises.”⁸⁵ The committee worked with state leaders to create a decentralized system of local draft boards.⁸⁶ The courts upheld the right of a legislature to compel able-bodied young men to complete ROTC training as an obligation to society for funding their education.⁸⁷ ROTC was probably the largest advantage that the Army developed during the interwar period. With over ninety thousand officers in ROTC and 120,000 officers commissioned into the Officer Reserve Corp, the army had faithfully been keeping up their military training.⁸⁸ With German aggression in Europe the army’s interwar efforts would pay off.

The 1940 Peacetime Draft

Following the Nazi conquest of Norway in 1940, Grenville Clark and other members of the MTCA meet at the Harvard Club in New York to discuss German aggression. During the interwar period, this highly influential group had always maintained their influence in senior government positions. The Secretary and Undersecretary of War, Henry Stimson and Robert Patterson, were Plattsburg graduates, members of the MTCA, and veterans of World War I.⁸⁹ Clark believed that the MTCA could reinvigorate the spirit of universal military training and the cause of preparedness by restarting the officer training camps that proved successful during

⁸⁴ Chambers, *To Raise an Army*, 249.

⁸⁵ John O’Sullivan, “From Voluntarism to Conscription Congress and Selective Service, 1940-1945” (O’Sullivan 1971) diss., New York: Garland Publishing, 1971), 18.

⁸⁶ George Q Flynn. *Lewis B. Hershey, Mr. Selective Service* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1985), 63.

⁸⁷ Ronald Schaffer, “The War Department’s Defense of ROTC, 1920-1940,” *Wisconsin Magazine of History*, 53 (Winter, 1969-1970), 109.

⁸⁸ William A. Ganoe, *The History of the United States Army* (Ashton, MD, 1942), 523.

⁸⁹ Clifford and Spencer, *The First Peacetime Draft*, 21.

World War I.⁹⁰ Clark would begin a campaign to that would harken to the vigor of 1917. The MTCA once again had the energy it needed with a war raging in Europe. The MTCA's desire for universal military training had never left and the time was right to rekindle their efforts.

Clark kept his eye on international affairs with growing concern. The Japanese invasion of Manchuria in 1931 and the rise of German power in Europe led Clark to believe that a new hegemon in Asia and Europe would prove disastrous. This balance of power struggle facing the international community would only lead a global conflict if the powers were not stabilized.⁹¹ Clark believed that only a coalition, which included Russia and China along with western democratic states, would be able to stop Germany and Japan. Clark perceived the threat of Japan and Germany as a direct threat to the United States and that the country needed start expanding their military capabilities immediately.⁹² Thus, Clark and the rest of the members of the MTCA would begin a planning effort for draft legislation.

Clark would enlist the help of retired army General John Palmer who was a principal advisor to the Senate Military Affairs Committee and one of the principal authors of the National Defense Act of 1920. Palmer was always an advocate for universal military training and a large reserve force.⁹³ On May 25, 1940, Palmer would have a meeting with Marshall to discuss the MTCA's plan for selective service. Marshall, initially, refused to lend his support to the first peacetime draft in the nation's history. Marshall was concerned that it would run counter to the efforts that had already been taken by the army and create an antimilitary backlash in congress.⁹⁴

Marshall since becoming Chief of Staff recognized the growing threat in Europe. In April

⁹⁰ Clifford and Spencer, *The First Peacetime Draft*, 15.

⁹¹ John G. Ikenberry, *After Victory: Institutions, Strategic Restraint, and the Rebuilding of Order after Major Wars* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 10-11.

⁹² Clifford and Spencer, *The First Peacetime Draft*, 24.

⁹³ Palmer, *America in Arms*, 206.

⁹⁴ Forrest Pogue, *George C. Marshall: Ordeal and Hope 1939-1942* (New York: Viking Press, 1965), 56.; Stoller, *George C. Marshall*, 76.

1939, the War Department commissioned a study on “the steps to be taken in the event that war develops in Europe and the President adopts a policy of preparedness.”⁹⁵ Following the German invasion of Poland in 1939, President Franklin D. Roosevelt authorized increases in army strength. Based on the study commissioned earlier that year the regular army grew by seventeen thousand men to 227,000 and the National Guard by thirty five thousand men to 235,000.⁹⁶ Marshall, working with Undersecretary Patterson, grew the Army Air Corps to six thousand aircraft.⁹⁷ Despite these efforts, members of Congress still remained aloof to the war in Europe.⁹⁸ This was evident in the authorized growth of regular officers from fourteen thousand to sixteen thousand. The officer increase was authorized to take place over a period of ten years and to be completed by June 1949.⁹⁹ Publicly, Marshall refused to defy President Roosevelt and Congress’s policies, but privately he knew Selective Service would be a great benefit to the army and speed up growth. “No one had to tell me how much it was needed, I knew that years before, but the great question was how to get it. It wasn’t for me to establish a reputation because I asked for selective service legislation.”¹⁰⁰ Unwilling to publicly support Clark and the MTCA’s measure, Marshall assigned three officers to support the drafting of the selective service bill.¹⁰¹ He wanted to ensure the bill did not conflict with the efforts that the Joint Army and Navy Selective Service Committee established. Marshall’s political savvy was fully displayed on June 4, 1940 when he

⁹⁵ Mark Skinner Watson, *Chief of Staff: Prewar Plans and Preparations* (Washington: Historical Division, Dept. of the Army, 1950), 153.

⁹⁶ Watson, *Chief of Staff*, 157. The National Defense Act of 1920 authorized a regular force of 280,000 and National Guard of 450,000.

⁹⁷ Ganoe, *The History of the United States Army*, 514.

⁹⁸ Watson, *Chief of Staff*, 164.

⁹⁹ Ganoe, *The History of the United States Army*, 514.

¹⁰⁰ Pogue, *George C. Marshall: Ordeal and Hope*, 56.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 58. One of those officers was Major Lewis Hershey who would become the godfather of selective service. He would remain in the Director of Selective Service until his retirement in 1973.

sent a letter to President Roosevelt asking for an increase of 120,000 in the Regular army and suggesting the use of a “civilian volunteer effort.”¹⁰² He made no mention of a draft in the letter but began the line of communication from the war department to utilize the civilian volunteer efforts established in each state.

By 14 June, Italy would align herself to Germany and take Paris. France sued for peace and a former ally in Europe had fallen. For Congressional leaders and the idea of a peacetime draft, which a few weeks ago seemed dead in the water, now became easier to pass. Clark introduced the MTCA’s draft legislation to Senator Edward Burke of Nebraska who agreed as the measure’s sponsor in the Senate. The other supporter of the bill, James Wadsworth of New York, had from the beginning been a supporter of selective service. On 20 June the Burke-Wadsworth bill was introduced and quickly gathered support in Congress.¹⁰³ Recognizing the momentum behind the bill, Marshall strongly endorsed it to the Senate Military Affairs Committee. He also took the opportunity to ask for enormous sums of money to arm and equip the draftees with a goal of a one and a half to two million men by mid-1942.¹⁰⁴ By 16 September, Congress had agreed to Marshall’s entire requests and the Selective Service Act of 1940 passed into law.

The work of the MTCA in conjunction with the Joint Army and Navy Selective Service Committee would start to pay off and the first round of draftees began in October. The act was designed to raise an army of maximum 900,000 men. Every male in the United States between the ages of 21 and 36 had to register for the draft and if called would serve one year on active duty.¹⁰⁵ The issue of officer strength became apparent to Clark and Marshall as men started flooding into the Army. The need for officers to lead men through training and potentially

¹⁰² Watson, *Chief of Staff*, 190.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 191.

¹⁰⁴ Stoler, *George C. Marshall*, 76.

¹⁰⁵ Flynn, *The Draft*, 18, 25. A public poll in December 1940 showed that 92 percent of the population believed that the draft was being handled fairly and 89 percent thought it was a good idea.

through combat became apparent. The army's officer strength was small and it needed to change.

Officer Procurement in 1940-1941

The army's regular officer strength prior to the Selective Service Act of 1940 was fourteen thousand. Marshall knew that this would not suffice and needed to grow the officer corps to meet the needs of this larger Army. The good news is that officer candidate training was part of the mobilization planning that the army prepared for during the interwar period. Marshall knew that in peacetime that the production of officers was limited to military academies, the Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC), the National Guard, and the Officer Reserve Corps (ORC). The General Staff estimated that 225,000 officers were needed in the first year of mobilization for an army of three million.¹⁰⁶ With the officers in the regular army combined with the National Guard and ORC 128,000 were expected to be available. The remaining officers would come from Officer Candidate School (OCS).¹⁰⁷

Marshall had a long belief that the men who would become officers needed to have a taste of living a soldier's life. Robert Patterson and Greenville Clark disagreed with Marshall. The MTCA was riding recent momentum following the passing of the Selective Service Act. This led Clark and Patterson to believe that restarting the Officer Training Camps would be an efficient and effective way to gather officers for the new draft army. Clark urged a program for civilian camps to train thirty thousand "picked men."¹⁰⁸ The concept of "picked men" came under scrutiny again and followed the MTCA from the days of selecting highly educated businessmen,

¹⁰⁶ Robert K. Palmer, Wiley I. Bell, and William R. Keast, *Army Ground Forces: The Procurement and Training of Ground Combat Troops* (Washington, DC: Historical Division, Department of the Army, 1948), 325.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 327. By June 1941 five officer candidate schools for ground arms were established for Infantry, Field Artillery, Coast Artillery, Cavalry, and Armored.

¹⁰⁸ Eiler, *Mobilizing America*, 99.

lawyers, and former politicians to attend the Officer Training Camps in 1916-1917.¹⁰⁹ Marshall became upset with Patterson and felt that he was letting a civilian (Clark) meddle in the affairs of the Chief of Staff and the General Staff. Marshall bluntly told Secretary of War Stimson that he must decide to follow the views of himself and the General Staff in military matters or listen to Grenville Clark and the rest of the MTCA.¹¹⁰ Marshall's idea of a perfect candidate for OCS was an enlisted man who had a minimum six months in the army and showed the mental and physical aptitude to lead.

The War Department delegated the selection of men for OCS to the generals whom they served under. The standards for future candidates outlined by the War Department involved age, physical condition, military service, capacity for leadership, learning ability, citizenship, and character.¹¹¹ The standards for learning ability were measured by the Army General Classification Test. The issue that started to arise with this selection criterion was that field leaders did not want to give up their best and brightest and unloaded substandard noncommissioned officers. This caused not only a delay in getting the right candidate but also infuriated the War Department's G1, personnel directorate, who began receiving repeated complaints. This caused Marshall to dispatch scathing letter to the field saying, "Blue chips only in the pot."¹¹²

Another issue that Patterson felt needed addressed was the thousands of young men who had outstanding intelligence and ability that entered the ranks as draftees. Most of these newcomers were privates and Patterson was not convinced that these men should stay in a situation that did not use their full potential. He pressed Marshall to immediately place sixteen

¹⁰⁹ Chambers, *To Raise an Army*, 233.

¹¹⁰ Pogue, *George C. Marshall: Ordeal and Hope*, 102.

¹¹¹ Palmer, Bell, Keast, *Army Ground Forces*, 328.

¹¹² John M. Collins, "World War II NCOs." *Army Magazine* (February 2005), 62. The top scores were placed into class I and II which increased the amount and type of officer branches the candidate could choose from.

thousand men in officer training.¹¹³ Marshall held his ground on the selection of officer candidates and defended his six-months of minimum service rule. He wanted his officers to meet a standard of uniformity, ensuring that the product that OCS produced would meet the army's leadership needs. No formal education requirement was ever specified for OCS applicants. The educational standard was merely a question of whether the candidate possessed the required knowledge to pass the course.¹¹⁴ Marshall insisted that the comparisons to the officer training camps of 1917 were misleading and the requirements of officers in World War I were not as stringent due to the less complex battlefield. The new demands of modern warfare would require an officer corps to meet the unprecedented challenges facing them.¹¹⁵ At the end 1941, only 1,389 officer candidates were commissioned.¹¹⁶ This number was grossly inadequate and needed to change immediately.

During the summer of 1941, Grenville Clark seized an opportunity to once again push his idea of officer training camps. The discontent of draftees increased because they were not convinced that we were in any immediate danger. Moral began dropping rapidly and Clark believed that the poor quality of officers was the single most important factor. In Clark's mind, the major source of these poor officers came from the National Guard. The National Guard was able to promote from within their ranks and the men of debatable quality were pushed up into commissions.¹¹⁷ Clark recommended a drastic elimination of the unfit officers, an expanded OCS program, and an open appeal to the general population for officers. Marshall offered to open commissions to qualified civilians who would volunteer for OCS after they had taken basic

¹¹³ Eiler, *Mobilizing America*, 101.

¹¹⁴ Palmer, Bell, Keast, *Army Ground Forces*, 329.

¹¹⁵ Eiler, *Mobilizing America*, 102.

¹¹⁶ Palmer, Bell, Keast, *Army Ground Forces*, 327.

¹¹⁷ Eiler, *Mobilizing America*, 109.

training.¹¹⁸

All of these valued issues did not concern Marshall as much as the possibility of all of this being for naught. The one-year of active service obligation for National Guard and draftees would end in October 1941. Without an extension the army would face a demobilization that would have drastic effects. Marshall argued his case in his biennial report as the Chief of Staff saying,

The material phase of our task is generally understood. The personnel phase is not, and it is here that the legal limitations, acceptable at the time of their passage, now hamstringing the development of the Army into a force immediately available for whatever defensive measure may be necessary.¹¹⁹

Congress would deliberate and on August 12, 1941 passed the Service Extension Act of 1941 by the narrowest of margins: 203 yeas to 202 nays.¹²⁰ Now that Marshall was relieved of this concern Robert Patterson would continue to press Marshall on the morale of troops, the quota of officers in OCS, and the quality of officers in the ranks.

Officer Crisis of 1942

With the small amount of officers commissioned at the end of 1941, Robert Patterson pressured Marshall to raise the OCS quota to twenty thousand officers. This measure had the backing of Secretary of War Henry Stimson. As a result, a siphoning of talented and seasoned noncommissioned officers from line units began at a rapid pace.¹²¹ The filling of the ranks with qualified officers was paramount for success but finding the qualified candidates became an issue. It also became necessary to recruit volunteers from civilian life to keep the officer candidate

¹¹⁸ Pogue, *George C. Marshall: Ordeal and Hope*, 102.

¹¹⁹ *Biennial Reports of the Chief of Staff of the United States Army to the Secretary of War 1 July 1939-30 June 1945* (Center of Military History, United States Army, 1996), 16.

¹²⁰ Watson, *Chief of Staff*, 230.

¹²¹ Collins, "World War II NCOs.", 62.

schools filled.¹²² Issues started to arise with the type of candidates that were joining the Army Ground Forces as compared to other military services or other army branches. The selection of men to serve in the Army Air Corps is a great example.

The rapid expansion of the Air Corps increased the need for qualified pilots. Patterson viewed the problem much the same way he viewed OCS, full rapid expansion. Prior to the full expansion and rapid recruitment of pilots, cadets needed to have at minimum a two-year college degree. Patterson wanted good pilots and plenty of them. He was certain that men who possessed the required aptitude and intelligence existed even though they never saw the inside of a college classroom.¹²³ Patterson worked with the chief of the Air Corps, Major General Henry “Hap” Arnold, on a plan to grant waivers to men with only a high school education. The unintended effect of this policy was the disproportionate amount of high intelligence men who received their commissions in the Air Corps over the Army Ground Forces.¹²⁴ The policy made it difficult for the officer candidate schools that required higher mathematical knowledge, such as field artillery, air defense, and engineers, to meet their quotas. Also, if a noncommissioned officer failed flight school the Corps would retain that individual and not send him back to their unit. The result was a disproportionate amount of enlisted men who scored into class I or II on the Army General Classification Test (AGCT) to remain in the Air Corps. More than a third of these school failures remained privates in the Air Corps as messengers, orderlies, truck drivers, and assistant cooks.¹²⁵ The cumulative result of this was the lack of officers for the ground forces in 1942.

The army shortage of ground officers created a plan to redefine the qualifications for

¹²² Palmer, Bell, Keast, *Army Ground Forces*, 104. The requirement for civilian volunteers to attend basic combat training prior to Officer Candidate School was never relaxed.

¹²³ Wesley Frank Craven and James Lea Cate, *The Army Air Forces in World War II* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948), 428-430.

¹²⁴ Palmer, Bell, Keast, *Army Ground Forces*, 107.

¹²⁵ Collins, “World War II NCOs.”, 60. Class I and II scorers were considered of the higher intelligence and were usually recommended for specialized technical positions.

commissions. Originally, candidates who were lacking in leadership qualities were removed from their respective officer candidate school. This seemed wasteful to invest a large amount of time into a prospective candidate just to have them returned to their previous unit for lack of combat leadership skills. The army decided to take the candidates and produce “good administrators who lacked combat leadership skills.”¹²⁶ This started to fix the numbers gap but still did not fix the talent gap that the ground forces suffered from in comparison to the Army Air Corps or other military branches.

The army’s lack of direct commissioning resulted in a loss of talent that was available in the civilian world. Marshall refused to direct commission officers of comparable education (with the exception of doctors, lawyers, and other professionals). The talent gap began to grow between the army and the liberal commissioning of the Navy and Marine Corps. The other services produced a large portion of their officers by granting commissions to civilians prior to any training based on their educational background. The effect was that many men with a high degree of education volunteered to commission in the Navy and Marines avoiding selective service as enlisted men in the Army.¹²⁷ The Navy and Marines could essentially hand pick their officers.

A further decline in available officer talent for the ground forces came about from the Army’s Specialized Training Program (ASTP). Started by Secretary of War Stimson, the aim of ASTP was to reduce the talent gap that existed by sending highly intelligent men to colleges and universities in a cadet status, and then place them back in the army ground force. Stimson believed that the program would produce a continual flow of technically and professionally trained men for the prosecution of war. Marshall would say, “The Army has been increasingly handicapped by a shortage of men possessing desirable combinations of intelligence, aptitude,

¹²⁶ War Department letter to OCS Commandants, June 16, 1942.

¹²⁷ Palmer, Bell, Keast, *Army Ground Forces*, 4.

education, and training...who are qualified for service as officers of the Army.”¹²⁸ If selected for the program, candidates would specialize in such subjects as engineering, linguistics, and medicine.

The net result was that 150,000 men who would classify as AGCT class I and II were attending college while the army needed ground combat leaders.¹²⁹ Major General Lesley McNair, the Army Ground Force commander, argued against the program. He was fearful that the program would pull some of the brightest recruits away from officer candidate schools preventing them from filling their quotas.¹³⁰ McNair and his staff argued that the program should be postponed and only continue if the army found itself in a war past 1944.¹³¹ McNair also felt that, once in the program, their specialization would naturally lead them away from the ground forces. Realizing that many of the potential best and brightest may never find themselves in the ground forces, McNair took necessary steps to acquire them. To fill the need for high quality individuals the Army Ground Forces had to convince the War Department that they needed individuals with specialized training. This effort manifested itself in the agreed upon curriculum that the students in the program received. Courses in basic engineering, internal combustion engines, optics and surveying could be used by any element of the ground services. When the program began in the spring of 1943, the Army Ground Forces were able to acquire over twenty nine thousand men, who upon graduation would attend their respective officer candidate school.¹³²

To complicate matters, the diversion of quality personnel to the ASTP and other

¹²⁸ *Essential Facts About the Army Specialized Training Program* (US Army Services, 1943), 1.

¹²⁹ Herman A. Obermayer, *Soldiering for Freedom: A GI's Account of World War II* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2005), 12.

¹³⁰ Palmer, Bell, Keast, *Army Ground Forces*, 28-29. The standard for the men to attend basic combat training continued to persist.

¹³¹ Lous E. Keefer, *Scholars in Foxholes: The Story of the Army Specialized Training Program in World War II* (Reston, VA: COTU Publishing, 1988), 14-15.

¹³² Palmer, Bell, Keast, *Army Ground Forces*, 32-33.

recruiting policies forced Marshall to find officer candidates in units conducting military training for combat. This led to units pulling high quality enlisted men that would serve the ground forces as competent squad leaders and platoon sergeants to officer training. By the summer of 1942, quality had fallen so quickly that divisions were now recruiting potential officer candidates who only had one year of high school, and they still could not provide the desired numbers.¹³³

This effort to reduce the talent gap in the Army had good intentions but did not have staying power. After the Sicily campaign in July 1943, the heavy demand for replacements set in and a narrative began that ASTP stood for All Safe Till Peace.¹³⁴ The number of needed replacement infantrymen by January 1944 was comparable to the number of men that were joining the ASTP. The acceleration of the war by February 1944 set in motion the belief that the army could no longer afford to have 150,000 men attending college. They were needed in combat units and the ASTP was eventually cancelled. The sad reality is that most of the individuals who signed up for ASTP did not receive a commission but found themselves in infantry line units on the front lines. The army had promised them a college education then changed its mind. The benefit to the army was that 150,000 of the best and brightest were now being infused into army formations.¹³⁵

The officer shortage of 1942 strained the army as a full declaration of war and combat operations would begin in the Pacific. Patterson was convinced that the General Staff had failed to prepare the army for war properly saying that they had been “asleep at the switch.”¹³⁶ The quotas that Patterson called for would not materialize until the summer of 1943 when OCS was

¹³³ Mark T. Calhoun, *General Lesley J. McNair: Unsung Architect of the US Army* (Lawrence, KS: University of Kansas Press, 2015), 301.

¹³⁴ Obermayer, *Soldiering for Freedom*, 14.

¹³⁵ Stephen E. Ambrose, *Citizen Soldiers: The U.S. Army from the Normandy Beaches to the Bulge to the Surrender of Germany, June 7, 1944-May 7, 1945* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1998), 274.

¹³⁶ Eiler, *Mobilizing America*, 111.

able to produce more than 200,000 officers.¹³⁷

The Army Ground Forces assumed control of officer procurement in March 1943. The balance of overproduction versus underproduction became of concern. Overproduction was wasteful and would shut down the potential for promotion for new officers in the army. The future requirement of officers was nearly impossible to predict exactly. By the end of 1943 the army ended procurement of officers from civilian life and began to reduce the output of officer from OCS. This was due in part to the declining expansion of the army and the belief that full mobilization was complete.¹³⁸ Even through these struggles the army was still able to produce enough officers for the war effort.

Conclusion

Before anything else, preparation is the key to success

—Alexander Graham Bell

The Plattsburg Camps and the officer expansion following the 1940 Peacetime Draft offer a comparison of two methods for recruiting and developing officers during a wartime surge. Each time period presented many challenges to the political and military planners on the most efficient way to find not only an overall quantity of officers but of quality. The challenges of leading men in combat to serving on operational staffs can be complex. The time, effort, and planning dedicated to preparing for a large expansion of the military is paramount. The decision for the United States to enter into World War I and II was not driven by our actions alone but by world events.

The needs to balance the international and domestic policy were always at odds.¹³⁹ The will of the majority of the populace to wage war would have a direct impact on political decisions

¹³⁷ *Biennial Reports of the Chief of Staff*, 88.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, 88.

¹³⁹ Robert D. Putnam, "Diplomacy and Domestic Politics: The Logic of Two-Level Games" *International Organization* 42, no. 3 (1988), 427-430.

just as much as the political decision would affect the military ones.¹⁴⁰ The preparedness movement started by General Leonard Wood created a campaign to influence the populace, military, and political leaders. Wood recognized the need for the United States to prepare for war in Europe whether the United States would enter into the conflict or not. The need for officers to lead the new and much larger army was of paramount concern. No system of officer development, beyond the military academies, existed and the need for creative ways to grow the officer corps during wartime emerged. The model of the Plattsburg Camps would have lasting effects on our nation as it grew to over 200,000 officers in less than a year.¹⁴¹ The Plattsburg model was revolutionary for finding men who had the educational background to quickly fill the ranks of the AEF with necessary leadership.

Planning for this began with Wood but became accelerated with Grenville Clark and the rest of the MTCA. Clark recognized a need for the army and knew that efforts started by Wood would not work without a political component. The formation of the MTCA with a powerful lobby of influential people in business and politics was instrumental in gathering support for the officer training camps. All of these efforts began two years prior to the declaration of war in 1917 by President Wilson. The training and development of men with the appropriate level of education created a segment of ready-made officers that could be called on a moment's notice. What was unique about these officers was their effectiveness of bringing a specialized skill set to a military that was lacking. The army used these officers in an operational capacity that suited the needs of a new and larger military to meet the demand of fighting a war on another continent. Pershing was also able to quickly accelerate promotions commensurate to position no matter the length of time the officer was in the AEF.¹⁴²

¹⁴⁰ Carl Von Clausewitz, *On War*, ed. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976), 80-81.

¹⁴¹ Clifford, *The Citizen Soldiers*, 228.

¹⁴² Cooke, *Pershing and His Generals*, 50-55.

The AEF was unique because the people who possessed specialized training or skills in business, law, and politics were wearing an army uniform. The army did not have to outsource these skills to a contractor. By having these officers under his command, General Pershing was able to utilize their experience but maintain a unity of command. This was a by-product of selecting highly educated college graduates and businessmen to attend the officer training camps. Through the camps, the Army managed to pull the best and brightest under their umbrella and keep that expertise in a command structure. This allowed Pershing and other field commanders the leverage to promote or move these experts where and when they saw fit. The constraints of working with non-army personnel did not apply.

Similarly General George Marshall tried to develop talented officers from the enlisted ranks. The work that had been done by Wood, Clark, and the MTCA was weaved into the National Defense Act of 1920 through the strengthening of the Reserve Officers Training Corps (ROTC) and the Officer Reserve Corps (ORC). Marshall reaped the benefits by having a premade force of educated college men. What Marshall failed to do was prepare for the upcoming demand of high quality officers. ROTC could not supply the officer ranks by itself. Recognizing this Marshall believed that the creation of Officer Candidate School (OCS) would fill the gap.¹⁴³

Marshall narrowed his focus of the recruitment of officers to attend OCS to only enlisted members currently serving. Marshall was not able to recruit the best and brightest from civilian volunteers because of his insistence that OCS recruits have a minimum of six months service. The expertise that benefited Pershing during World War I became a challenge for Marshall. Civilians with specialized experience in the civilian world volunteered for the Navy and Marine Corps to avoid the minimum service time that the army required. The army had quality personnel but time to create an officer in the army was delayed through policy and the creation of other recruitment tools, like the Army Specialized Training Program (ASTP). Effectively culminating in an officer

¹⁴³ Stoler, *George C. Marshall*, 76.; Pogue, *George C. Marshall: Ordeal and Hope*, 102.

shortage in 1942 that forced the army to find officers at any cost, even from units conducting combat training.¹⁴⁴ This situation did not evolve from a lack of preparedness but from the policies of the Chief of Staff. The good news is that the army eventually did get enough qualified officers at the end of 1943 but under a system that lacked the flexibility of the AEF.

Some parallels can be drawn looking at the military today. The army is currently in a war on multiple fronts in Iraq and Afghanistan and the questions about officer development and talent management are very prevalent.¹⁴⁵ The army today has a lack of flexibility that is a derivative of World War II policies. The professionalization of the force has created an administrative bureaucracy that places officers in positions based on a next man philosophy rather than a best qualified philosophy. As observed by former Secretary of Defense Robert Gates, “too many officers were assigned...because [they were] identified as ‘next in line’ rather than because they were selected as best qualified” while “too many talented officers who achieved real...success were rotated...simply to keep the personnel system running smoothly.”¹⁴⁶

This level of bureaucracy would prove difficult for an army that finds itself in a protracted war with a near peer competitor and forced to grow through conscription. The identification and training of new officers by the MTCA for the AEF was extremely flexible but lacked a perception of equality. The more stringent policies of General Marshall provided much needed experience to the officer ranks and uniformity but lacked the ability to recruit the most talented from the citizenry. The army of today does not need to approach this scenario blindly but can look to the past to identify the most democratic method for war time expansion.

¹⁴⁴ Collins, "World War II NCOs.", 61.

¹⁴⁵ Andrew Tilghman, "Force of the Future: Career Flexibility, Fewer Moves", *Military Times*, (September 2015), accessed March 31, 2016, <http://www.militarytimes.com/story/military/careers/2015/08/28/force-future-report-ash-carter-review/32476549/>

¹⁴⁶ Robert M. Gates, *Duty: Memoirs of a Secretary at War*. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2014), 577.

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